

In the Claims:

1 - 66. (cancelled)

67. (currently amended) A material discrimination system including a high energy X-ray source, a first detector component in the form of a thin scintillation crystal for registering an amount of energy deposited by an X-ray that is essentially independent of the X-ray energy, a thicker one-piece downstream scintillation crystal, a low-Z converter situated between the thin crystal and the thicker crystal to stop electrons produced by X-ray interactions downstream of the thin crystal from being significantly backscattered into the thin crystal and prevent electrons leaving the thin crystal from returning and depositing more energy in the thin crystal, and a plurality of read-out devices for detecting light energy emitted by the crystals and generating respective electrical output signals in response thereto, wherein a pair of read-out devices is provided to read out from opposite sides of the thin crystal, and further pairs of read-out devices are provided to read out from opposite sides of the thicker crystal at different respective depths in the beam direction, and wherein the output signal from one read-out device of each pair is added to the output signal from the other read-out device of the pair on the opposite side of the crystal to reduce any left/right asymmetry in the output signals.

68. (previously presented) A material discrimination system as claimed in claim 67, wherein the low-Z converter is formed of aluminium.

69-72. (cancelled)

73. (previously presented) A material discrimination system as claimed in claim 67, wherein behind the low-Z converter is located a high-Z, high density converter.

74-75. (cancelled)

76. (currently amended) A material discrimination system as claimed in claim 73,

~~where~~wherein the high-Z converter is formed of tungsten.

77-78. (cancelled)

79. (previously presented) A material discrimination system as claimed in claim 67, wherein each pair of read-out devices comprises a pair of photodiodes or a pair of optical fibres.

80. (cancelled)

81. (previously presented) A material discrimination system as claimed in claim 67, wherein an absorber is located at the rear of a detector assembly.

82. (previously presented) A material discrimination system as claimed in claim 81, wherein the absorber is formed of aluminium.

83-111. (cancelled)

112. (previously presented) A method of operating a material discrimination system for X-ray inspection using high energy X-rays which includes a Linac for generating high energy X-rays, a detector, and a detector read-out system, a synchronizing arrangement for synchronizing the read-out system with each Linac pulse, and a triggering arrangement for selectively triggering the Linac on a Linac pulse, the method comprising the steps if:

- pulsing the Linac;

- performing one read-out cycle for each Linac pulse

- triggering the Linac with the triggering arrangement to generate X-rays on each alternate pulse of the Linac only; and

- subtracting signals generated by the detector during read-out cycles for pulses on which the Linac is not triggered which correspond to background noise and crystal persistence from signals generated by the detector during read-out cycles for pulses on which the Linac is triggered.